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## **The Impact of Global English on Motivation to Learn Other Languages: Towards an Ideal Multilingual Self**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In 2006, Graddol predicted that numbers of ‘English as a foreign language’ learners would begin to decline through the second decade of this century, as global English achieves basic skill status for children entering education in more societies across the world. As he further noted, having skills in additional languages may thus offer a competitive edge in a global job market where English skills have become common place, and where monolingual and even bilingual English speakers may lose out to multilingual competitors. As yet, however, the extent to which the spread of global English may motivate individuals to diversify their language skills beyond English seems limited. Rather, both empirical evidence and commonly held perceptions would seem to endorse the view that global English tends to impact negatively on motivation to learn other languages, despite the growing linguistic and cultural diversity of today’s societies. This article critically analyses this impact on motivation from two perspectives. Firstly, from a macro-sociological perspective, it explores the tensions among language globalization, multiculturalism and multilingualism in today’s changing social world, and examines the mixed messages communicated for language education in general and for language learners in particular. In so doing, it considers the socially distributed nature of motivation at the level of societal multilingualism and educational policy and practice, and the impact of the social on the individual. Secondly, from a theoretical perspective, the article considers whether the impact of global English on motivation to learn other languages might be more positively construed by shifting away from SLA frames of reference (concerned with progression towards proficiency in a particular language) in favour of a ‘linguistic multi-competence’ framework, defined by Cook (2016) as the overall system of a mind or community that uses more than one language. As the

article concludes, an important pedagogical implication would be a focus on multilingual (rather than L2) speakers as the normative model of communication and instruction, and the associated promotion of ideal multilingual selves.

*Keywords:* instrumentalist versus constitutive views of L2 learning; motivation and linguistic multi-competence; ideal multilingual selves

A few years into the new millennium, Graddol (2006) observed that ‘global English’ might mean the end of ‘English as a foreign language’. Analysing international demographic, economic, and educational trends through the first decade of this century, he highlighted the emergence of a ‘new orthodoxy’ (p. 97) in education systems around the world relating to the place of English in the curriculum. Whereas English traditionally used to belong in the ‘foreign languages’ curriculum typically starting at secondary or middle school (Grades 6–7), Graddol characterized the ‘new orthodoxy’ as pursuing the following: introducing English much earlier at basic education level (Grades 1–3); teaching part of the school curriculum through English at secondary level (i.e., content-based instruction, or content and language integrated learning); making proficiency in English a requirement for university entry; and teaching more university courses through English or expecting students to engage with academic resources in English (pp. 96–97). In Graddol’s view, a consequence of this new orthodoxy is that the numbers of people learning ‘English as a foreign language’ would start to decline from the second decade of this century, as cohorts of children who have acquired English as a basic educational skill (alongside literacy, numeracy and ICT skills) advance to secondary and tertiary education (pp. 98–99).

As Graddol further observed, as English makes this transition from ‘foreign language’ to near-universal ‘basic skill’ and as English language skills thus become common place in the world’s labour markets, monolingual and even bilingual English speakers may steadily lose out to their multilingual competitors (pp. 118–119). In principle, such a scenario would seem to provide a powerful rationale for developing skills in additional languages in order to maintain or gain a competitive edge, as the economic advantage and linguistic and social capital associated with proficiency in English begin to dissipate, ironically because of its global and ubiquitous

status. However, as the second decade of this new century rolls on, there seems as yet limited evidence to suggest that the global spread of English may actually motivate people to diversify their language skills. The research evidence within both Anglophone and non-Anglophone settings appears rather mixed, with global English impacting in complex and often negative ways on motivation to learn other languages, even within our increasingly pluralist and culturally and linguistically diverse societies (see, for example, Dörnyei, Csizér, & Németh, 2006; Taylor & Marsden, 2014; see also the rest of this special issue).

In this article I critically analyse this impact on motivation from two perspectives. Firstly, from a macro-sociological perspective, I explore the tensions among language globalization, multiculturalism, and multilingualism in today's changing social world, and examine the mixed messages communicated for language education in general and for language learners in particular. The focus here will be on language learning motivation as a socially distributed and socially mediated phenomenon (Ushioda, 2003), thus looking beyond the individual-psychological dimension to examine the impact of global English on societal and individual motivation to engage with other languages. Secondly, from a conceptual perspective, I consider whether the impact of global English on motivation to learn other languages might be more positively construed by shifting away from the traditional second language acquisition (SLA) frames of reference that have shaped language learning motivation research. Concerned with progression towards proficiency levels and standards in a particular language, these SLA frames of reference are theoretically grounded in a deficit view of L2 learning as a less successful enterprise than L1 learning. Drawing on the concept of the multilingual mind, I will propose instead an alternative approach to framing motivation in the context of 'linguistic multi-competence', defined by Cook (2016) as "the overall system of a mind or a community that uses more than one language" (p. 2). As I will discuss, such an approach may lend itself to more positive and constructive messages for motivating societal and individual engagement with languages beyond global English.

## GLOBAL ENGLISH AND THE INSTRUMENTAL VALUE OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

As Boo, Dörnyei, and Ryan's (2015) recent literature survey has shown, the number of published studies in the field of L2 motivation research has grown exponentially within the last decade. Moreover, most (72.67%, p. 151) of these recent studies (surveyed from 2005 to 2014) have

been concerned with researching motivation for learning English as target language, often in educational settings characterized by the authors as primarily monolingual, such as Japan or regions of China. While the dominance of English learning contexts in the L2 motivation research field is perhaps unsurprising, it is worth reflecting briefly on possible factors contributing to this phenomenon.

Broadly speaking, of course, this growth of motivation research in English learning contexts can be attributed to the sheer growth in numbers of English language learners around the globe, where English is now estimated to be “spoken at a useful level by some 1.75 billion people – a quarter of the world’s population” (British Council, 2013, p. 5). Consequently, contexts of English language learning and use currently dominate many areas of research inquiry across language education and applied linguistics more broadly, and in this respect the L2 motivation research field is thus not exceptional. However, the globalization of English would seem to raise issues that interact with the *motivational* dimension of language learning in particular, and this may help explain the recent remarkable surge in SLA research where motivation is concerned. The globalization of English has a significant impact on socio-political ideologies and educational agendas at local, national, and transnational levels, and these ideologies and agendas in turn have inescapable repercussions for language learning motivation at the individual level. As I have previously noted (Ushioda, 2013, p. 2), the global status of English and the educational importance ascribed to this language across the world might lead one to assume that the motivation for learning English is unquestionable and that it therefore does not require justification or examination. Yet, as I commented then:

it seems that issues of motivation are often high on the agenda despite – or perhaps because of – the significant status English has in local or national educational policy, curriculum provision, high stakes gatekeeping exams, the professional job market and society at large. (Ushioda, 2013, p.2)

Positioning this observation within the ecological framework for SLA recently developed by the Douglas Fir Group (2016) and inspired by the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979), we might say that macro-level socio-political ideological structures and meso-level institutional structures are exerting significant downward pressures on the micro level of social activity where language learning and interaction take place. Located within this micro level, individuals often have little choice but to learn English, and consequently motivation (in a more complex, dynamic, and

multi-dimensional sense than simple choice motivation) truly matters. In short, understanding the multifaceted, pressure-driven and often fragile nature of this motivation at the individual learner level (and how to optimize and support it pedagogically) has become a major research concern, leading to the “unprecedented boom” (Boo et al., 2015, p. 145) in published studies in recent years.

In terms of my arguments in this article and the core themes of this special issue, this inseparable association between English language globalization and growth in L2 motivation research raises at least two important issues. As other articles in this collection examine, there is the issue of whether prevailing theoretical analyses of L2 motivation (grounded in English learning contexts) are adequate to account for people’s motivations for learning languages other than English (LOTEs). However, for the purposes of this article, a more fundamental critical issue is whether our current ways of thinking about language learning motivation (shaped by English language globalization) may constrain our efforts (as members of the academic and professional community involved in language education) to inform policy and practice and thereby influence societal and individual motivation to engage with languages other than English. This critical issue concerns the predominant theoretical focus on the *instrumental* value of learning English (i.e., as a necessary means to a personally or socially desirable end), and on the concomitant instrumental value of learning languages in general.

As English continues to cement its status as a global language (Crystal, 2003), a basic educational skill (Graddol, 2006), and a world auxiliary language (Lo Bianco, 2014), the motivation for learning English becomes increasingly associated with factors such as necessity, utility, advantage, social capital, power, advancement, mobility, migration, and cosmopolitanism. Over the years, theories of L2 motivation have evolved that seek to capture such factors in terms of concepts such as extrinsic motivation (Noels, Clément, & Pelletier, 2001), instrumental motivation (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991), investment (Norton, 2015), international posture (Yashima, 2009), imagined communities and identities (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007), or ideal and ought-to L2 selves (Dörnyei, 2009). In other words, central to much theorizing about L2 motivation (and associated empirical research) is a focus on the future goals and purposes of language learning, and the degree to which these are internally driven (e.g., ideal L2 selves), socially driven (e.g., externally regulated extrinsic goals, or ought-to L2 selves), or locally negotiated and contested (e.g., investment and identity goals). While goal-directed

behaviour is of course core to most theoretical accounts of human motivation, the instrumental or pragmatic value of learning the dominant global language has clearly become a significant factor in people's motivations for acquiring English, and has thus strongly shaped how researchers have sought to theorize such motivation in terms of future goals or self-states linked to English language proficiency or certification. As I will discuss, this instrumentalist view of language learning motivation is very much in tune with current ideologies and discourses influencing language education policy and curriculum practices, and influencing educational policy and practice more broadly. However, as I will argue, such a view (and its associated ideologies and discourses) may communicate a somewhat restricted set of motivations for learning languages in general that will not necessarily be helpful in promoting uptake or enhancing societal and individual engagement with language diversity.

#### AN INSTRUMENTALIST VIEW OF LANGUAGE LEARNING: IMPLICATIONS FOR MOTIVATION

As Graddol's (2006) arguments cited earlier make plain, English language skills have become a basic commodity in the global labour market, with more and more governments around the world emphasizing the economic necessity for their citizens to acquire English, and investing in promoting English language education. Of course, in the globalized society we inhabit, few people would downplay the essential usefulness of English language skills in facilitating social and economic mobility and access to desirable resources and opportunities. However, as Lo Bianco (2014) comments in relation to Graddol's analysis, language education more broadly thus becomes increasingly constructed "as a tool of narrowly conceived economic interests" pitted against "a rival vision of humanistic, cultural, and intellectual goals" (p. 322). In effect, current discourses around the value of learning languages, especially English as a global language, reflect "the emphasis on human capital development" (Kubota, 2016, p. 469) in today's globalized knowledge economy that is shaped by powerful neoliberal ideologies. As Kubota argues, language education in the 21st century is underpinned by this pragmatic focus on developing communication skills and knowledge that can be objectively measured (by means of language tests), and that can bring competitive economic benefits to the individual and society. Of course, language education is hardly unique in this respect since neoliberal ideologies have long shaped educational systems and discourses more broadly (e.g., see Hill & Kumar, 2009).

This is reflected, for example, in the intensifying marketization of higher education with its focus on student as consumer (Molesworth, Scullion, & Nixon, 2011) and its ever-increasing emphasis on graduate employability and transferable skills for the workplace.

This prevailing instrumentalist view of language education, grounded in global English learning contexts and shaped by neoliberal discourses of education, has significant repercussions for how motivation for learning languages other than English is construed at the macro and meso levels of socio-political and institutional structures represented in the Douglas Fir Group's (2016) ecological framework for SLA. In essence, as Scarino (2014) argues in relation to language education policy in Australia, for example, the promoted instrumentalist rationale for learning languages would seem to override the intrinsic educational value of engaging with other languages and cultures:

There is a tension about the emphasis on 'practical' proficiency in languages for the purposes of future employment and economic value to the nation as opposed to allowing school programmes to focus on the educational, social, linguistic and cultural enrichment that can be derived from learning languages. (p. 299)

For example, as Coffey (2016) observes in the UK school context, the modern languages curriculum tends to focus on developing practical communication skills needed for service encounters (e.g., ordering food, booking a hotel room) or other transactional purposes (e.g., asking for directions). While this curriculum focus may originate in communicative language teaching principles rather than neoliberal ideologies, it clearly coheres well with the current instrumentalist rationale for learning languages. As Coffey argues (citing Gray, 2010), the emphasis on transactional communication skills effectively positions the language learner as a tourist or consumer. As he comments, "this type of instrumentalism posits a set of motives that are easy for students who do not envisage a future needing this transactional capital to refute" (p. 14), particularly when there is a popular assumption that communication in English usually suffices in such transactional exchanges. In short, the practical value of learning foreign languages promoted in Anglophone educational contexts and embodied in curriculum content may fail to connect with the motivations and priorities of their youth populations, as suggested by the falling numbers of language enrolments in, for example, the United States (MLA, 2015), and in the low levels of foreign language competency in the United Kingdom compared with most European countries (European Commission, 2012). Moreover, as evidenced by this same



European Commission survey of language competences, the dominance of English as first foreign language in other EU countries may, in turn, contribute to the comparatively low levels of competence and uptake in respect of additional foreign languages among non-Anglophone youth in Europe, reflecting perhaps institutional curriculum priorities as well as individual motivational priorities. This is despite explicit plurilingual policies in the European Union that aim to promote the learning of two languages in addition to the first language (Franceschini, 2011). It is also despite the fact that large-scale migration and the global flow of people have contributed to sweeping changes across the social landscape of Europe (and other regions of the world), leading to increasing multiculturalism and multilingualism in many communities.

In this last respect, the global phenomenon of multiculturalism and multilingualism may give rise to mixed messages when it comes to promoting motivation for learning languages other than English, because of the perceived status ascribed to certain languages and to certain categories of learner. As Kibler and Valdés (2016) comment, language education policies in most developed countries maintain a clear distinction between provision for migrant and minority group children required to learn the dominant societal language, and provision for foreign or world languages in the school curriculum. While this distinction may stem from a practical necessity to enable migrant or minority group children to access education in the mainstream language, Kibler and Valdés critically associate it with “the social positions that minoritized groups occupy in that society” (p. 98), which may contribute to a deficit view (in the United States) of the ‘long-term English language learner’ (LTELL) category that has essentially replaced the less politically correct ‘semilingual’ label (Flores, Kleyn, & Menken, 2015). This negative social positioning of migrant or minority group language learners may also be reflected in educational and institutional policies that do not provide space for such learners’ home, heritage or indigenous languages in the school curriculum (Liddicoat & Curnow, 2014). In effect, as Liddicoat and Curnow comment, languages “exist within hierarchies of value that influence how they are used in education and society more generally” (p. 277), reflecting factors such as the international prestige and economic or cultural capital associated with particular languages. Thus, for example, as Zhu Hua and Li Wei (2014) highlight, Chinese language learning has become a major growth area in the United Kingdom, largely owing to the perceived importance of China as a global economic and political power, coupled with China’s own geopolitical strategy of promoting Chinese as a global language through investment in Confucius

Institutes and Classrooms. In short, at the macro socio-political level, Chinese occupies a high status position in the hierarchies of value according to which languages become implicitly categorized.

At the meso level of communities and institutional structures, these hierarchies of value may then also interact with social class or socio-economic status, as Coffey (2016) highlights in his analysis of the uptake of modern foreign languages among students in the United Kingdom. Reviewing the literature evidence, he observes that social class and socio-economic status are increasingly recognized as significant in shaping attitudes to language learning, with students from independent (i.e., fee-paying) schools rather than state-funded schools much more likely to study foreign languages beyond the age of 14 (when foreign languages cease to be compulsory) and more likely to achieve high grades (see also Lanvers, 2017, this issue). From the perspective of societal and individual motivation to engage with learning languages, there is thus what Liddicoat and Curnow (2014) identify as a value imbalance between ‘elite’ bilingualism associated with studying foreign languages that have social and economic prestige, and ‘folk’ bilingualism associated with socialization in the home and dominant societal languages. Nor is this value imbalance confined to Anglophone settings, since it is a pattern that Stavans and Hoffman (2015) also observe, for example, in Latin America. As they comment, in many Latin American communities where there are speakers of indigenous languages, multilingualism (rather than Spanish monolingualism) tends to be associated with the socially disadvantaged rather than with successful members of mainstream society, and “being bilingual may well be considered a burden rather than a desirable sociocultural resource” (p. 113). Yet, among more affluent sectors in the same Latin American communities, there is now “a new kind of incipient elite multilingualism” (p. 113) associated with learning and using English for its prestigious economic and instrumental value.

Beyond the economic arguments for advocating foreign language skills that will benefit the individual and society, there are also now of course significant national and global security arguments for highlighting the instrumental importance and necessity of language skills. In the United States, these arguments were brought into sharp focus in the wake of 9/11, when the country’s “inability to communicate with or comprehend other parts of the world became a prominent subject for journalists, as language failures of all kinds plagued the United States’ military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq and its efforts to suppress terrorism” (MLA, 2007,

p. 1). As Wiley and García (2016, p. 52) recount, these events led to the Critical Languages Act in 2006 and the funding of Flagship and STARTALK programs to teach critical-need languages for the purposes of enhancing the country's ability to communicate effectively on the world stage and strengthen national security. In other geographical regions too, national and global security agendas have similarly become linked to the development of foreign language skills, as Scarino (2014) observes in relation to changing government priorities in Australia that would now seem to promote "an instrumental, economic/international, security rationale" (p. 291) for learning languages. As she subsequently comments, this changing socio-political rationale presents a significant challenge for those in the language teaching profession who "seek to maintain a social, educational, humanistic rationale" and yet who "need to embrace the rationales articulated by the government" (p. 291) in order to attract funding.

In effect, returning to the Douglas Fir Group's (2016) ecological framework for SLA, it seems that the interactions among macro, meso, and local micro-levels are complex and potentially fraught when it comes to motivational agendas for learning languages beyond global English. Larger socio-political agendas and neoliberal ideologies promoting the utilitarian value and necessity of languages may not be whole-heartedly endorsed within the professional and academic communities and institutions responsible for language education, who may wish to promote more humanist educational values of self-development, linguistic enrichment and cultural understanding. Moreover, within these socio-political and institutional structures, there may be different priorities accorded to different languages, and there may be more valued and less valued forms of bilingualism or multilingualism. Across different socio-economic communities, there may also be differences in opportunities, beliefs, and attitudes relating to the pursuit of foreign language learning. Such mixed messages and competing discourses at the larger macro and meso levels may then impact at a local level on those who engage or choose not to engage in learning languages other than English and who have their own personal motivational agendas.

## FROM AN INSTRUMENTALIST TO A MORE HOLISTIC VIEW OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

Tasked with examining the post-9/11 language crisis in the United States and mindful that national security agendas might considerably narrow the goals of language study, the MLA

published a report (2007) which set out to offer a broader transformative approach to the study of language and culture, particularly in higher education. In essence, the approach seeks to balance the instrumentalist view of language study as a skill for communication with a more holistic ‘constitutive’ view – that is, a view of language “understood as an essential element of a human being’s thought processes, perceptions, and self-expressions” and considered to be “at the core of translingual and transcultural competence” (p. 2). As the authors of the report explain, the goals of advanced language training are often defined in terms of educated native speaker levels of competence, which are rarely attainable. On the other hand, the promotion of translingual and transcultural competence places value on the capacity to operate between languages and cultures as informed and educated speakers and mediators. The focus is thus not on linguistic progression towards native speaker standards in a particular language, but on what Scarino (2014) describes as the development of students’ whole linguistic and cultural repertoire within an intercultural orientation. This is akin to the view long promoted by the Council of Europe (2001), according to which individuals are not regarded as having “a collection of distinct and separate competences to communicate” depending on the languages they know, but are viewed as possessing “a plurilingual and pluricultural competence encompassing the full range of languages available” (p. 168) to them.

Significantly, however, this more holistic constitutive view of language learning in terms of a person’s whole linguistic and cultural repertoire has yet to make significant inroads into our ways of conceptualizing (and thereby promoting) *motivation* for learning languages. In the next part of this article, I will critically examine why this is the case, and consider whether the impact of global English on motivation to learn other languages might be more positively construed (and such motivation better promoted) by shifting from an instrumentalist to a more holistic ‘multi-competence’ view of language learning.

## MOTIVATION AS AN SLA CONCEPT

A major reason why language learning motivation tends not to be conceptualized in relation to a person’s whole linguistic and cultural repertoire would seem to lie in its theoretical heritage as an SLA concept (i.e., focused on the acquisition of a single second language). This is despite the origins of this field of inquiry in the context of societal bilingualism and multilingualism.

Historically, the L2 motivation research field originated in the bilingual setting of Canada, where socio-political and educational policies pertaining to language learning and use have long been significant concerns at national and provincial level. Much of the early pioneering research thus focused on L2-related motivation and attitudes among English or French Canadians, or in other bilingual or multilingual settings such as in the American states of Louisiana and Maine, or in the Philippines (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). In essence, research interest in language learning motivation developed in contexts where there were direct opportunities for social contact and integration between neighbouring linguistic communities, and where attitudes to such contact and integration were theorized to influence L2 learning motivation. Central to this theorizing was the view that motivation to learn another language is inherently different from motivation in other domains of learning such as history or science. This is because such motivation entails a readiness not only to acquire knowledge of the language but also potentially to expand one's behavioural repertoire and allow "elements of another culture into one's own lifespace" (Gardner, 1979, p. 193). In effect, this conceptualization linking language learning motivation to a willingness to diversify one's behavioural, linguistic, and cultural repertoire would seem to share affinities with the holistic view of plurilingual and pluricultural competence discussed in the previous section.

However, despite its origins in the social context of bilingualism and multilingualism, the study of L2 motivation was firmly shaped by the purpose of explaining variability in L2 learning success, rather than the purpose of investigating bilingual or multilingual development. The fundamental question that Gardner and Lambert (1972) posed was simple: "How is it that some people can learn a second or foreign language so easily and do so well while others, given what seem to be the same opportunities to learn, find it almost impossible?" (p. 130). The theoretical and empirical focus was thus on motivation as a possible explanatory variable for success in L2 learning, alongside other explanatory variables such as language aptitude. From the origins of this field of inquiry in the late 1950s (Gardner & Lambert, 1959) and throughout its evolution to the present day, language learning motivation has consistently been theorized and investigated in relation to levels of success, achievement or persistence in L2 learning. Thus, while L2 motivation research may historically predate the establishment of mainstream SLA research in the 1960s (Ellis, 2008, p. xix), the study of L2 motivation is firmly rooted in the field of SLA rather than the parallel field of multilingualism research. This strong grounding in SLA research

agendas and frames of reference has important consequences for how language learning motivation has been and continues to be construed – that is, in relation to a deficit view of L2 learning as a less comparatively successful enterprise than L1 learning.

Clearly, the field of SLA research has a rich and varied history, and it continues to evolve and redefine itself in response to changes in disciplinary thinking, traditions, methodologies, priorities, and wider socio-political and global circumstances. Fundamentally, nevertheless, SLA research is defined by its focus on the learning and use of second, foreign or additional languages, in principle at any point in a person's life after primary socialization in a first or dominant language (Douglas Fir Group, 2016, p. 19). In this respect, SLA research derives its rationale as a field of inquiry from the observation that, while many L2 learners do achieve very high levels of proficiency, L2 learning is commonly a rather more variable and less successful process than L1 learning. In relation to L2 learning variability and success, for much of its history SLA research has considered monolingual 'native speaker' standards of target language proficiency to be the baseline against which L2 development is measured and investigated. This is despite explicit emphasis within the field that SLA is concerned with "how learners create a new language system" (Gass & Selinker, 2008, p. 1), rather than how they approximate native speaker systems in the target language. What Klein (1998) called the 'target deviation perspective' for characterizing L2 development and its processes and products is implicit in many of the core concepts associated with SLA research, such as interlanguage, ultimate attainment, fossilization, critical period, error analysis, transfer, or attrition. The associated deficit view of L2 learning as a more variable and generally less successful enterprise than L1 learning has strongly shaped the SLA research agenda, focusing it on the study of factors that may contribute to explaining variability in L2 development and ultimate attainment. These factors include learner individual differences such as aptitude, personality, beliefs, anxiety, and of course motivation.

#### FROM TARGET LANGUAGE NORMS TO LINGUISTIC MULTI-COMPETENCE

This deficit view of SLA as a learning enterprise contrasts sharply with the perspectives on second or additional languages that characterize the parallel field of bilingualism and multilingualism research. Here, the concern is not so much to explain or measure people's varying levels of competence in additional languages, but rather explore and understand their

practices and experiences as they engage with two or more languages in particular social contexts, and as they develop and deploy ‘linguistic multi-competence’. Linguistic multi-competence has been defined by Cook (2016) as “the overall system of a mind or a community that uses more than one language” (p. 2). It is a concept that embodies a fundamental epistemological difference between multilingualism and mainstream SLA approaches to research, as Murahata, Murahata and Cook (2016) explain:

In a way, the multi-competence perspective takes the ‘descriptive’ approach central to all linguistics and tries to describe how L2 users are, rather than the ‘prescriptive’ approach, which prescribes how L2 users should be. (p. 38).

In their view, a multi-competence perspective focuses on the composite language systems of L2 users in their own right, and while comparison with monolingual ‘native speaker’ systems may provide useful insights into the unique qualities of both, any such comparative analysis is not premised on the view that L2 user systems are inferior or deficient – i.e., the ‘comparative fallacy’ criticized many years ago by Bley-Vroman (1983) in relation to interlanguage studies.

It would seem that, despite its origins in bilingual and multilingual social settings, L2 motivation research has been informed more by ‘prescriptive’ than ‘descriptive’ approaches, since it has largely been preoccupied with investigating what forms of motivation shape or hinder successful progression towards proficiency in a particular target language. Indeed, degree of convergence towards target language norms is central to the processes of social identification theorized to underpin ‘integrative’ forms of L2 motivation in Gardner and Lambert’s (1972) original research. Degree of convergence to (or divergence from) target language norms is also central to the concepts of social distance and ethnolinguistic affiliation in associated social-psychological models of L2 learning in situations of contact between language communities (e.g., Giles & Byrne, 1982; Schumann, 1978; Segalowitz, Gatbonton, & Trofimovich, 2009).

In recent years, of course, these processes of social-psychological identification have become theorized as an internal process within the self-concept (i.e., imagined future self-representations or desired identities) rather than affiliation with a specific external reference group or target language community (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2009). This re-theorizing has arisen because in today’s rapidly changing world characterized by the global flow of people, communication, information, and social networks, the association between target languages and specific communities of speakers is becoming blurred and difficult to define. While this is

particularly the case for global English, described by Pinner (2016) as a ‘disembodied language’, it is also increasingly so for languages that are widely spoken across different geographical areas (e.g., Spanish, Chinese, Arabic), and for languages functioning as a lingua franca between speakers of different regional languages, such as Russian in territories of the former Soviet bloc (Pavlenko, 2006). Moreover, as Lo Bianco (2014) observes, even languages traditionally categorized as ‘foreign’ (rather than ‘second’) because they are associated with external geopolitical states are often no longer ‘foreign’ in this sense, since globalization has ‘domesticated’ the foreign through the influx of people from different language backgrounds in many societies today.

As the traditional boundaries defining nations, communities and languages become fluid in today’s globalized societies characterized by growing ‘super-diversity’ (Vertovec, 2006), and as the varieties of target language use students encounter outside the classroom or online expand and mesh, it seems increasingly difficult to sustain the idea of ‘convergence towards target language norms’ as a key criterion in our theorizing about L2 motivation. Of course, some L2 learners may be strongly motivated to achieve ‘native speaker’ standards of proficiency. However, this is not a realistic motivational goal for the vast majority of L2 learners, despite the fact that, as Collins and Muñoz (2016) note, most modern languages “are taught with a ‘native speaker’ (NS) model in mind, with the expectation that students will be learning the language to use it with NSs” (p. 140). In the 21st century, ‘native speaker’ models and contexts of interaction may not provide a meaningful motivational frame of reference in view of the linguistically and culturally diverse contexts of interaction most L2 users will encounter, where they may find themselves drawing flexibly on a range of different semiotic resources to accomplish communication.

## MOTIVATION AND LINGUISTIC MULTI-COMPETENCE

In this respect, a ‘linguistic multi-competence’ framework may offer an alternative approach to theorizing motivation that takes greater account of the complex realities of communication in today’s globalized yet increasingly pluralist and diverse societies. Traditional SLA frameworks focus on motivation in relation to learning a single target language or, in some cases, on comparative motivations or motivational interactions in relation to learning two or more languages (e.g., Csizér & Lukács, 2010; Desirée Castillo Zaragoza, 2011; Henry, 2011;



Humphreys & Spratt, 2008; Thompson & Erdil–Moody, 2014). Taking this latter bilingual and multilingual motivational focus somewhat further, a linguistic multi-competence approach to framing motivation would broaden the scope to consider motivation holistically in relation to the total composite system of languages and associated cultural and intercultural fluency developed by the individual. According to Cook (2016), a basic premise of linguistic multi-competence is that it concerns “the total system for all languages (L1, L2, Ln) in a single mind or community and their inter-relationships” (p. 7), instead of focusing on individual language systems in isolation. Shaped by psycholinguistic research into multiple language acquisition (e.g., De Angelis, 2007; Jessner, 2006), this view of the organic interconnectedness of language systems in the mind has been conceptualized, for example, in terms of complex dynamic systems theory (CDST) whereby multi-competence entails continuously evolving interactions among the different languages in use or not in use within the single eco-system of the multilingual mind (De Bot, 2016). Given the recent growth of CDST perspectives on processes of L2 motivation too (Dörnyei, MacIntyre, & Henry, 2015; see also Henry, 2017, this issue), a linguistic multi-competence approach to framing motivation would seem to fit epistemologically with current thinking in the field.

In essence, this suggested approach to theorizing motivation connects with the previously discussed ‘constitutive’ view of language learning in relation to a person’s whole linguistic and cultural repertoire, as proposed by the MLA (2007) to counter the dominant ‘instrumentalist’ view narrowly defined in terms of economic and security agendas. As discussed earlier, this holistic constitutive view does not emphasize standards and goals in relation to ‘native speaker’ norms in particular languages and the associated assumption that students are learning the language in order to communicate with native speakers. Rather, reflecting the more complex sociolinguistic realities of today’s linguistically and culturally pluralist societies, this holistic constitutive view of language learning places value on a person’s capacity to operate effectively between languages and cultures as informed and educated speakers and mediators. This translingual and transcultural competence draws flexibly on the rich range of semiotic resources that people possess and continuously develop through their lifetime. As elaborated by the Douglas Fir Group (2016), these integrated semiotic resources include first, home or dominant languages, languages acquired formally or informally later in childhood or adulthood with varying degrees of mastery, as well as the multiple fragments of linguistic and cultural

knowledge pertaining to other languages encountered at some level during one's life experience. From this perspective, as Leung and Scarino (2016) elaborate, the goals of language education become reconceptualized to highlight the essentially "multilingual character of communication and learning to communicate" and reoriented to focus on "expanding the meaning-making repertoires of individuals" (p. 88). In this way, the idea is that learners are brought to develop 'linguacultural mobility' as they learn adaptively "to 'move between' linguistic systems and cultural practices" (p. 91), including those associated with their primary language and culture.

Importantly, this theoretical and pedagogical focus on expanding a person's whole meaning-making repertoire places a premium on conceptualizing language learners from the beginning as *language users*. As Leung and Scarino (2016) comment, "learners need to participate in the focal language as multilingual users and not as developing native speakers" (p. 88). This conceptualization is core to the notion of linguistic multi-competence, since, as Cook (2016, p. 4) describes, people who know and use a second language at any level have multi-competence and are L2 users, rather than L2 learners whose task of developing L2 competence perpetually remains incomplete. This conceptualization of L2 learners as multilingual users from the outset who are expanding and diversifying their meaning-making repertoires would seem to have significant implications for motivation. As Cenoz and Gorter (2011) comment, in school contexts there is still a widespread perception that non-native speakers are 'deficient communicators', leading to an inevitable sense of failure and incompleteness as L2 learners (p. 340). By countering this perception with the view that non-native speakers are multilingual communicators, the potential for reducing this sense of failure and incompleteness and for motivating engagement with language learning and use would seem much greater. In effect, as Kramsch (2014) proposes for the teaching of foreign languages in the current era of globalization, the model of instruction needs to be the multilingual speaker, rather than the native speaker or indeed the proficient non-native speaker (i.e., defined with reference to monolingual competence in a particular language). The multilingual speaker model and associated communication practices can provide a realistic and meaningful frame of reference for motivation. This is partly because they represent the normality of communication repertoires and practices in today's world; and partly because they represent who students already are and what they can already do as incipient multilingual communicators who are expanding their repertoires, rather than represent only some kind of distant ideal future state.

This does not mean that a linguistic multi-competence approach to framing motivation is incompatible with the notion of ideal L2 selves, as theorized in Dörnyei's (2009) L2 Motivational Self System. As the growing body of research evidence shows, visions of a future ideal L2 self may have strong psychological reality for many language learners and serve to channel their motivation to learn a particular language. For example, Dörnyei and Chan's (2013) study of Cantonese-speaking students learning both English and Mandarin points to the co-existence of separate L2 self images for each target language, corroborating previous research findings on the psychological distinctiveness of L2 and L3 ideal selves. However, in the context of this special issue, if our concern is to examine the impact of global English on motivation to learn other languages and to seek constructive ways of encouraging such motivation, there may well be pedagogical arguments for promoting ideal *multilingual* selves (see Henry, 2017, this issue) rather than promote a focus only on ideal L2-specific selves. The notion of an ideal multilingual self would cohere with the multilingual speaker model of instruction proposed for foreign language teaching by Kramsch (2014). It would also connect directly with students' current self-states so that they see themselves from the outset as multilingual users who are expanding and diversifying their meaning-making repertoires, rather than as learners who are progressing (or struggling to progress) through predefined levels and standards in a particular L2. In this respect, promoting ideal multilingual selves may have particular pedagogical value in classroom contexts where interest in foreign language study is generally low or where many are inclined to struggle with or disengage from language learning because the goals of L2 proficiency seem too remote or personally irrelevant. On the other hand, in language classroom settings where levels of engagement are high or where learning a particular language develops value or personal meaning for individual learners, motivation may be more likely channelled by ideal language-specific self-guides. Yet, even for motivated learners of this kind who possess ideal self-representations associated with specific languages, it seems likely that these language-specific self-guides could strengthen in positive interaction with multilingual self-guides. This is because developing a positive image of oneself as a multilingual speaker may enrich the motivational value of being able to speak particular languages perceived as personally desirable (see Henry, 2017, this issue).

Importantly, other articles in this special issue (Busse, 2017; Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017; Henry, 2017; Lasagabaster, 2017) similarly highlight the potential significance of ideal

multilingual or plurilingual (rather than L2-specific) selves, and the desirability of developing a more integrated conceptualization of ideal language selves, including L1 selves. This would suggest that a multilingual self perspective in L2 motivation theory may be especially relevant when it comes to looking beyond global English learning contexts.

## MOTIVATION, GLOBAL ENGLISH, AND THE MULTILINGUAL TURN

Clearly, the arguments I have been putting forward in this article ally with the recent ‘bi/multilingual turn’ characterizing the broad landscape of language teaching and learning research (May, 2014), and underpinning the transdisciplinary relevance of SLA in the 21st century (Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Ortega, 2013). Critically oriented, the multilingual turn is associated not simply with an increasing recognition of multilingualism as the normative reality in today’s globalized societies, but more particularly with rejection of the ‘native speaker’ monolingual bias in our theorizing about SLA and target language models, and a corresponding emphasis on the multiple competencies and rich linguistic repertoires of all multilingual learner-users.

While the multilingual turn is increasingly influencing thinking across many domains of theory, pedagogy, and research in language education, it seems that it has been slower to make inroads into our thinking about language learning motivation. As noted earlier, L2 motivation research has tended to focus on the learning of a particular language in isolation (most notably, English), or on comparative motivations or motivational interactions relating to the learning of two or more languages. This language-specific orientation in our thinking, coupled with the predominant concentration on global English learning contexts, has led us to theorize L2 motivation in relation to future goals and self-states associated with the personal, social or economic value or status that L2 proficiency can bring. As I have discussed, this perspective on motivation connects well with the ‘instrumentalist’ view of L2 learning reflected in the current ideologies and discourses shaping language education policy and curriculum practice in many contexts, where learning foreign languages other than English is often explicitly linked to factors such as economic and utility value, employability, social prestige, necessity, or global and national security. While such factors may help explain growth in uptake of certain languages accorded important global or critical status such as Chinese or Arabic, this instrumentalist view would seem to communicate a rather narrow rationale for learning languages that may not

resonate with the motivations and priorities of everyone, as argued earlier. Such a rationale may not resonate particularly with those who firmly believe in the need for English only, despite Graddol's (2006) earlier cited predictions that monolingual and even bilingual English speakers may soon lose their competitive edge in the global market place (see, for example, Henry's critical analysis of the 'contentedly bilingual self' in this issue). The instrumentalist association with economic and social advantage may also fail to connect with communities where foreign language learning is perceived as elitist or where multilingualism is perceived as a problem.

In order to promote more constructive societal and individual engagement with language diversity and motivate more general grassroots interest in language learning, I have suggested that we need to look beyond these instrumentalist perspectives (deriving in large part from our preoccupations with global English) and focus instead on what Agnihotri (2014) calls our fundamental 'multilinguality' that is constitutive of being human. In her view, multilinguality is not a matter of having separate competences in different languages. Rather, it characterizes what language is and how we use language in our everyday lives, drawing adaptively on a fluid range of linguistic, cultural, intercultural and interpretative resources in particular contexts of interaction. In the language classroom, multilinguality manifests itself most explicitly when students and teachers engage in 'translanguaging' practices, drawing flexibly on their other shared linguistic resources to facilitate communication and learning in relation to the focal language (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García, 2007). As Wiley and García (2016) comment, the traditional approach to keeping languages separate when teaching "does not reflect the interactive multilingual spaces in which speakers communicate today" (p. 57). In effect, all language users have a translanguaging competence for navigating communication in these interactive multilingual spaces, and this translanguaging competence continues to grow and strengthen as they expand their linguistic and cultural repertoire.

Even in multilingual classroom contexts where students and teacher share few linguistic resources to facilitate translanguaging practices, engaging students' motivations as multilingual users entails drawing attention to each individual's whole linguistic and cultural repertoire as the core focus for development and growth. It also entails encouraging (rather than discouraging) flexible integration of and mobility between different semiotic resources to achieve communication and understanding, so that students do not feel penalized for mixing linguistic codes but are brought to see themselves as resourceful and adaptive multilingual communicators

(see Pennycook, 2012) rather than as struggling or deficient L2 learners. Of course, in terms of language curriculum policy and assessment, it must be acknowledged that focusing on the multilingual speaker and associated communication practices as the normative model for language pedagogy raises various complex challenges. However, these are beyond the scope of this article to address. Rather, my concern here has been to consider at a more fundamental level how we might engage the motivations of those who feel disconnected from the prevailing instrumentalist goals of proficiency in languages other than English, by promoting a more holistic and constitutive view of language learning and communication.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

As I have argued, promoting a less instrumentalist and more constitutive view of language learning in this sense entails focusing attention on multilingual speakers and their translingual and transcultural competences and communication practices as the normative model for instruction, rather than on native speakers or proficient non-native speakers defined with reference to monolingual competence in a particular language. In terms of motivation theory and pedagogical practice, I have suggested that this would entail placing value on the development of ideal multilingual selves, rather than ideal L2-specific selves, as an approach to engaging those in particular for whom the goals of L2 proficiency seem remote or irrelevant. Such ideal multilingual selves would cohere directly with students' current selves as developing multilingual language users who are continuing to expand and enrich their communication repertoires.

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